

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MILAN 0506

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SUBJECT: MILAN DC SECRETARY COMPLAINS OF US SUPPORT FOR AGNELLI

1. MILAN'S TOUGH YOUNGISH DC CITY SECRETARY, VITTORINO COLOMBO, CALLED ME IN MARCH 1 TO GIVE ME A PIECE OF HIS MIND. COLOMBO, SEVERAL TIMES MINISTER, FORMER TRADE UNION LEADER, LOCAL HEAD OF THE PREDOMINANT LEFT WING OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY BACKING ZACCAGNINI AND ENJOYING THE FULL CONFIDENCE OF CARDINAL COLOMBO, MINCED NO WORDS ABOUT ALLEGED US RELATIONS WITH GIOVANNI AGNELLI AND OLD LINE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADERS IN ROME.

2. COLOMBO SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD ENORMOUS POWER WITHIN ITALY AND THAT INTENTIONALLY OR INADVERTENTLY IT WAS HELPING THE VERY FORCES THAT WERE MOST LIKELY TO DESTROY ITALIAN DEMOCRACY. HE WAS ESPECIALLY ANGRY AT THE SENSATIONAL LINE TAKEN BY THE WEEKLY NEWS MAGAZINES, PANORAMA AND ESPRESSO, THE NEW LEFT WING DAILY, LA REPUBBLICA, AND THE OLDER DAILIES, MESSAGERO IN GOME, STAMPA IN TURIN, AS WELL AS THE CORRIERE IN MILAN. COLOMBO SAID THAT AL THESE PUBLICATIONS, AND OTHERS, WERE OWNED AND CONTROLLED BY ITALY'S MOST POWERFUL MONIED INTERESTS. AGNELLI OWNED AND CONTROLLED LA STAMPA, HE WAS INDIRECTLY FINANCING LA REPUBBLICA
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AND ESPRESSO. EUGENIO CEFIS, HEAD OF MONTEDISON, WAS FINANCING AND CONTROLLED CORRIERE AS WELL AS MESSAGERO. YET, HE SAID, THESE MAJOR INSTRUMENTS OF PUBLIC OPINION FORMATION IN ITALY WERE EXPLOITING EVERY

BIT OF NEWS, WHETHER ACCURATE OR RUMOR, EMANATING FROM THE UNITED STATES AS A RESULT OF THE CHURCH HEARINGS AND THE CIA RELATIONS TO DISCREDIT ITALY'S DEMOCRATIC PARTIES. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MONTANELLI'S IL GIORNALE, THERE WAS NOT A SINGLE MAJOR NATIONAL NEWS-PAPER OR MAGAZINE THAT ATTEMPTED TO PUT THESE ISSUES IN ANY KIND OF OBJECTIVE PROSPECTIVE. THE FACT IS, SAID COLOMBO, THAT ITALIAN PUBLIC OPINION IS MADE IN LA STAMPA, THE CORRIERE DELLA SERA AND TO A LESSER DEGREE, IN ESPRESSO AND PANORAMA. THAT THESE POWERFUL ORGANIZATIONS OF INFORMATION AND MISINFORMATION SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE FINANCED BY AGNELLI AND CEFIS WAS INCOMPREHENSIBLE TO HIM.

3. THE UNITED STATES' RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS, HE SAID,

LAY IN ITS CONTINUED TREATMENT OF AGNELLI AS IF HE WERE OUR CHOSEN INSTRUMENT. IT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE, HE SAID, THAT AGNELLI IS AMERICA'S MAN. HE GOES TO WASHINGTON AND MEETS WITH THE MOST IMPORTANT AMERICAN OFFICIALS. HE HOBKNOBS WITH DAVID ROCKEFELLER. AND YET, IT IS HIS MONEY THAT IS BEING CYNICALTY USED TO DESTROY NOT ONLY THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, BUT THE SOCIALISTS AS WELL WHO ARE OPPOSED TO A COMMUNIST TAKE OVER. IS IT NOT ABOUT HIGH TIME, HE SAID, THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD STOP ENDORSING AGNELLI AND HIS POLICIES? THE UNITED STATES SHOULD STOP INVITING HIM TO WASHINGTON AND STOP RECEIVING HIM WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT. OR IF HE IS RECEIVED, HE SHOULD BE TOLD BLUNTLY AND WITHOUT AMBIGUITY THAT UNTIL THE PRESS THAT HE CONTROLS HAS CHANGED ITS LINE, HE IS NO LONGER WELCOME. THE MESSAGE, COLOMBO INSISTED, HAS GOT TO BE GOTTEN ACROSS WHERE IT COUNTS.

4. IN MUCH THE SAME WAY COLOMBO URGED THE UNITED STATES TO STOP GIVING WHAT HE CLAIMED WAS VISIBLE SUPPORT TO THE DC OLD GUARD. THE VISIT OF ANDREOTTI TO THE UNITED CONFIDENTIAL

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STATES WAS TAKEN AS A SIGNAL EVERYWHERE, HE SAID, THAT HE WAS OUR CHOSEN INSTRUMENT WITHIN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY. PUBLIC SUPPORT, EVEN UNINTENTIONAL, FOR THE OLD GUARD SIMPLY PUTS OFF THE DAY OR DIMINISHES THE CHANCE THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY WILL BE ABLE TO RENEW ITSELF, ACCORDING TO COLOMBO. THAT RENEWAL WILL BE DESPERATELY DIFFICULT IN ANY EVENT. THE UNITED STATES CAN HAVE AN EFFECT UPON WHETHER IT SUCCEEDS OR FAILS. HE WANTED TO BE SURE THAT THE UNUNITED STATES DID NOT UNWITTINGLY OBSTRUCT A PROCESS OF CHANGE TO WHICH HE THOUGHT WE WERE PUBLICLY COMMITTED.FINA

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